

## **John Steele – photography**

Returning home in the early months of 1970 and trying to re-introduce myself to a society I had left two years prior and finding few that really respected or liked us was a task unto itself. For years, I had many questions about what had just taken place during the late 60s.

I did not live as an artist, although during my childhood I would draw my favorite animals. The majority of us who were in Vietnam had cameras documenting where we were and what we were doing. Shortly after returning home, I went back to school and in 1975 I graduated from the University of Utah College of Pharmacy – still just taking pictures, no art. It wasn't until the mid to late nineties that my curiosity about photography became more apparent, wanting to capture better images of my river trips in southern Utah and Idaho.

Two major events cemented my desire to become a photographer. First, in 1998 when I saw my first wild horse and second, in November 2006 when I was given a poem that changed me forever. It sent me back to Vietnam not once, but four times fostering a personal photography project there entitled "What I Could Not See".

Both events have changed me in ways I could have never imagined, allowing me to heal the silent wounds of war, softening me and answering many questions. It opened my eyes to a new world of Wild Horses and my reverence for them. It also revised my personal thoughts regarding Vietnam and my part in something that never should have happened.

As much as my camera has allowed me to look outside (my interests), more importantly, it forced me to look inside myself. The viewfinder does not lie.